CHRIST
THE
BEST HUSBAND:
Or an Invitation of
YOUNG WOMEN
UNTO
CHRIST.
Delivered in a Sermon to
YOUNG WOMEN.

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CHRIST THE BEST HUSBAND:

Pſal. 45. 10, 11.

Hearken; (O daughter) and conſider, and incline thine ear; forget alſo thine own people, and thy fathers houſe; ſo ſhall the King greatly deſire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.

THis Pſalm is called a Song of Loves, the moſt high, pure and ſpiritual, the moſt dear, ſweet, and delightful Loves; namely, thoſe which are between Chriſt, the Beloved, and his Church, which is his Spouſe: wherein is ſet forth, firſt, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in regard of his Majeſty, Power, and Divinity, His truth, meekneſs and equity; and then the Spouſe is ſet forth in regard of her ornaments, companions, attendants, and poſterity; and both are ſet forth in regard of their lovelineſs and Beauty. After a Deſcription is given of Chriſt, an invitation is made unto his Eſpouſals, and that of the children of men, called by the name of Daughter; and there-

fore particularly applicably unto the Daughters o men; yet not so as excluding the sons of men any more than when God speaketh unto the sons of men, he doth exclude the daughters; and with reference chiefly unto the Daughters I shall now speak unto the words; and from hence observe this Doctrine, as comprehensive of the words as I can make it.

Doct. *That the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, doth invite all the children of men, particularly the Daughters of men, to be his Spouse; and is exceedingly desirous of their beauty; who, forgetting their people, and fathers house, do hearken, consider, and incline to his invitation, and joyn themselves to him in this Relation.*

In handling of this point, I shall 1. speak concerning Christ's espousing himself unto the children of men. 2. Show that Christ doth invite all the children of men, and particularly the daughters of men, to be his Spouse. 3. That such who would be espoused unto Jesus Christ, must hearken, consider, and incline to his invitation, and forget their own people, and fathers house. 4. That such as are espoused unto Jesus Christ, are very beautiful. 5. That Jesus Christ doth greatly desire the beauty of such as are espoused unto him. 6. And lastly, Make some Application.

1. Concerning Christs espousing himself unto the children of men; Christ doth espouse and betroth people unto himself in this world; the publick solemnization of the marriage is reserved until the last day, when his Spouse shall be brought to him in white robes, and raiment of perfect righteousness, more rich and curious than any needle-

work;

work; and the Marriage-feaſt will be kept in his Fathers houſe in Heaven, where they ſhall be received into the neareſt and cloſeſt embracements of his Love. The eſpouſal between them, and marriage knot is tied here. There are four things chiefly included in Chriſts eſpouſal with the children of men; 1. Mutual choice. 2. Mutual affection. 3. Mutual union. 4. Mutual obligation.

1. Mutual choice, beſides the eternal choice, which is not only in Chriſt as Mediator, but alſo by Chriſt as the eternal Son of God; Chriſt doth in time actually chuſe ſome of the children of men, paſſing by others, without the leaſt reſpect to any worthineſs, or deſirable qualification in them, but freely, of his mere grace, to make them his Spouſe, and to bring them into the Marriage covenant, and relation to himſelf; and herein Chriſt doth begin, he chuſeth them firſt, as he telleth his Diſciples, *Joh.* 15. 16. *Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you*: and then they make choice of him above all to take him for their Lord and Husband; Chriſt findeth them deformed, defiled, enſlaved, poor, miſerable, wretched, very deſpicable and loathſome by reaſon of ſin; and he maketh choice of them, not becauſe they have any beauty, and ſutable qualifications for this match; but that he may put his beauty and comlineſs upon them, and endow them himſelf with ſuch qualifications as may make them meet for his embracements: but in their making choice of Chriſt, they are drawn to it by the moſt attractive and powerful motives of the tranſcendent beauty, and ſuperlative excellency which they ſee in him beyond all perſons and things in the world.

2. In this espousal there is mutual affection, this doth accompany the choice; on Christs part at first he doth bear a love of benevolence unto them whom he doth espouse; and doth desire the neareſt union and conjunction unto them, and therefore doth make suit to them for their Love: On their part, their hearts are drawn forth in desires after Christ: None but Christ, none but Christ, is the language of their hearts, when they are made throughly sensible of their need of him; and however his dowry at first is most desired, yet afterwards, as they get more acquaintance, they are most taken with his person.

3. In this espousal there is mutual Union; and herein most properly doth the espousal lie; in this union Christ and souls are contracted, and the knot is tied so fast, as no power can untie; which union is by the Spirit, on Christs part, and by Faith on their part; by the Spirit Christ doth lay hold on them, and by Faith they lay hold upon Christ; by the Spirit Christ doth draw them, and knit them to himself, and by Faith they come and joyn themselves unto him, and so the match is made; Christ becomes theirs, his person, portion, and all his benefits theirs; and they become Christs, their persons, their hearts, and all that they have is resigned up unto him.

4. In this espousal there is mutual obligation: Christ obligeth himself to them to love them, and never leave them, to protect, to provide for them, to live with them here, and at length to take them to live with him for ever; and they engage themselves unto him, to be loving, loyal, faithful, obedient, and with full purpose of heart to stick close

to

to him, as long as they live: this is implied in the eſpouſal it ſelf.

2. Chriſt doth invite all the children of men, and particularly the Daughters of men, to be his Spouſe; this is that which they are invited unto in the Text. It is upon this account that Chriſt doth ſend his Miniſters to be his Embaſſadours, to whom he giveth Commiſſion in his Name to call the children of men unto this moſt near and ſweet relation, they do repreſent his perſon, and are to invite and woe in his Name, that people would come and joyn themſelves unto him. The Apoſtle *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, how ſucceſsful his Embaſſage was amongſt them, upon this account, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. *I have eſpouſed you unto one husband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin unto Chriſt.* And when any Miniſters are inſtrumental in the converſion of any, they do eſpouſe them to Chriſt; in converſion, ſinners are divorced from ſin, and are married unto the Lord Jeſus. The Lord by his Word in the mouth of his Miniſters, doth make a general invitation unto all the children of men, and particularly, all the Daughters of men are invited to be Chriſts Spouſe; *Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, incline thine ear*, &c. Such as are elder are invited, but eſpecially thoſe that are younger; whether married or unmarried; of higher degree, or of the meaneſt quality; even the pooreſt ſervants are as welcome to be Chriſt's Spouſe, as thoſe that are rich; He regardeth not the rich more than the poor; He choſe a mean Virgin, eſpouſed to a Carpenter, to be his Mother; and he chuſeth and calleth any ſuch, and thoſe which are lower than ſuch to be his Spouſe.

3. That such who would be espoused unto Jesus Christ, must hearken, consider, and incline to his invitation, and forget their people and fathers house.

1. Such as would be espoused unto Christ, must Hearken; *Hearken, O Daughter.* Some, yea most of the children of men, shut their eyes as fast as they can against the light of the Word, and they shut their ears as fast as they can against the calls of the Word, like the deaf Adder, which will not hearken to the voice of the Charmer, charmes he never so wisely; so they will not hearken to the invitations of Christ by his Ministers, let them invite never so pathetically; It was by the ear that the temptation to sin was received at first by man, when he departed from God, and by the ear the invitation to be Christ's Spouse is first received, whereby any are restored unto Gods favour: the ear must be first opened to receive Christs invitation, before the heart will be opened to receive Jesus Christ in this conjugal relation, *Isa.* 55. 3. *Hear, and thy soul shall live.*

2. Such as would be espoused unto Christ, must not only hearken, but consider Christs invitation; *Hearken, O daughter, and consider.* It is not a slight or bare hearing of Christs invitation, which will make up the match between Christ and the Soul, but there must be a considering, a pondering of it in the mind, there must be a considering of the proffer it self, what it is, the reality of the thing, the necessity of the thing, the attainablenes of it, the greatnes of it, the freenes of it, the sweetnes of it, the advantage of it, the difference between Christs invitations, and the Devils temptations,

or

or any of the worlds proffers, and by ſuch conſidering and weighing the one with the other, the Soul will come to underſtand, and fully be perſwaded, that Chriſts invitations are moſt reaſonable and eligible.

3. Such as would be eſpouſed unto Chriſt, muſt incline unto Chriſts invitation; *Hearken, O daughter, and conſider, incline thine ear.* I ſuppoſe by the inclining of the ear is not meant the hearkning, of which before; but it includeth the inclining of the heart to accept of Chriſts invitation; there muſt be a conſent of the Will, and a ready compliance with Chriſt's motion, a cloſing of the heart with it; this doth ſhew it ſelf, when the Soul is not only ſued unto to accept of Chriſt, but it putteth forth deſires after Chriſt, and ſueth to him that it may be accepted into this relation. As *David* did incline unto the invitation of the Lord to ſeek his face, *Pſal.* 27. 8. *When thou ſaideſt Seek ye my face; my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek:* So the children of men incline to Chriſts invitation to be his Spouſe, when their hearts ſay, Lord, Let us be thy Spouſe, and be thou our beloved.

4. Such as would be eſpouſed unto Jeſus Chriſt, muſt forget their people, and fathers houſe, *Hearken, O daughter, and conſider, forget thy own people, and thy fathers houſe*; not as if by eſpouſing themſelves unto Chriſt, they were to caſt off all affections unto natural relations, but they muſt ſo forget all relations, as to be ready to forgoe all their favour, where it ſtandeth in competition with Chriſt; they muſt be ready to diſpleaſe any rather than to diſpleaſe Chriſt; and ſuffer the loſs of any thing

rather

rather than to loſe his favours; they muſt forget their own people, and fathers houſe, that is, they muſt forget all their evil cuſtomes which they have learn'd in their fathers houſe, and forſake their vain converſation received by tradition from their fathers, which Chriſt hath redeemed them from, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. Some think the words literally are an invitation of *Pharaohs* daughter to come out of *Egypt*, and forget her people and fathers houſe there, that ſhe might be eſpouſed unto King *Solomon*: and ſo hereby the Lord in calling upon people to be eſpouſed to him, would have them come forth from the *Egypt* of ſin, and forget and forſake all their former ſinful courſes and converſation: and truly ſuch who are in *Egyptian* bondage to ſin, have a Father the Devil, and their companions in ſin may be called their own people; theſe they muſt forget and forſake, and come out from amongſt; if not in regard of place, at leaſt in regard of courſe, if they would be eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus.

4. That ſuch as are eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, are very beautiful; I don't mean in regard of their bodies, they may have leſs of external comelineſs than others; and yet in regard of their bodies, (however mean and vile, however crooked and decrepid ſome of them now may be) even their bodies ſhall be form'd and faſhioned into an exact beauty, and put on a marvellous comlineſs, on the day when the Nuptials ſhall be ſolemnized; I mean the day of Chriſts ſecond appearance, and their reſurrection; then their vile bodies ſhall be made like to Chriſts moſt glorious body; *Philip.* 3. 21. their bodies then ſhall have a moſt

ſpark-

ſparkling beauty and luſtre, when they are transformed into the likeneſs of their Lords moſt beautiful and glorious body; whereby they will become very amiable both unto Chriſt, and one to another. But I now ſpeak of the beauty which here ſuch have who are eſpouſed unto Chriſt; they are very beautiful, not externally, but internally; not in regard of their bodies, but in regard of their ſouls; not ſo much in the eyes of men, as in the eyes of God; as verſe 13. of this *Pſalm*: *The Kings daughter is all-glorious within*: They have a glorious inſide, which is ſo far glorious as it is gracious; their ſouls are in ſome meaſure reſtored unto their primitive beauty; they have the moſt beautiful Image of God engraven upon them; and ſo far as they are like unto God in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs; ſo far they are marvellouſly beautiful. They are comparatively very beautiful; none in the world beſides them have the leaſt ſpark of ſpiritual beauty; ſuch as are not eſpouſed to Chriſt, are unrenewed; and ſuch as are unrenewed are exceedingly beſpotted and defiled with ſin; they have monſtrous natures and hearts; moſt ugly deformed ſpirits in the ſight of God. There are indeed ſome ſpots in Chriſts Spouſe, but there is beauty too; and they are growing on farther and farther towards perfection of beauty; and hereafter they ſhall be made perfect in holineſs; and here they are perfect in their Head, they have a covering for their ſpots; I mean the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, through which they are reputed by God as perfectly beautiful.

5. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth exceedingly deſire the beauty of ſuch as are eſpouſed unto him. He

He greatly desireth to see it, and enjoy it in his fellowship with them. See this desire after his Spouses beauty, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* See farther how he admireth the beauty of his Spouse, *chap.* 4. 1. *Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair!* He calleth his Spouse his Love, being the dear object of his love, and he admireth her lovelinesse: he repeats it twice, Thou art fair, Thou art fair: and that with a note of admiration, Behold thou art fair! and again, Behold thou art fair! and so he goeth on in the description of her beauty: and in the 7th verse he telleth her, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.* Through his own comlinesse which he had put upon her, he saw nothing but beauty, and no spot in her; and in the 9th verse we have a wonderful expression of Christ to his Spouse. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.* The Original word signifieth, thou hast un-hearted me, or taken away my heart from me; the Spouse had got away Christs heart with one of her eyes, with her looks and glances of love upon him; and he was excedingly taken with the chain of faith, and other graces linked together, about the neck of her Soul. The Lord Jesus doth marvellously delight in the internal beauty of his people, and he greatly desireth to see and enjoy it, which he doth, when they are brought near into the most intimate communion with him.

The APPLICATION.

Use 1. For Examination.

DOth the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, invite all the children of men, and particularly the daughters of men, to be his Spouse? and is he so greatly desirous of the beauty of such as are joyned unto him? This then should put all of you upon the enquiry, whether you are espoused unto Jesus Christ? You have been called hereunto, have you hearkened? You have had great proffers made to you, have you considered? You have been invited again and again, and many arguments have been used with you, to prevail with you to come and joyn your selves to the Lord Jesus; but have you inclined? Have you been perswaded? Is the match indeed made up between Christ and your souls?

If you are espoused unto Christ, then

1. You are disjoyned from sin; Is the cursed league broken, which is naturally between sin and your hearts? Before you come to be espoused unto Christ, you are as it were espoused and married to sin; sin is your Husband, and you are tied in its bonds; sin doth inhabit with you, and dwell in the embracements of your deareſt love and delight; you care for the things of sin, how you may please your flesh, and gratifie your inordinate desires; and whilst this husband and beloved of your hearts liveth, you are not at liberty to be espoused and married unto Jesus Christ; and sin liveth in the affections, whilst it doth possess the most

most prevailing liking affections; and so long you are knit and linked unto sin: examine whether sin hath yet received it's deaths wound in your hearts; whether ever the false mask of sin hath been plucked off, and the odiousness of it hath been made manifest unto you; whether your hearts have been brought to a loathing and detestation of it; and so sin killed in your affections, and the knot unloosed which hath tyed your hearts unto it? Do you indeed hate sin with the greatest and most implacable hatred? Is sin mortified and subdued as to its reigning power? if sin be dead, you are at liberty to be espoused, and it is a good evidence that you are espoused unto Jesus Christ.

2. If you be espoused unto Christ, then you have been drawn to him by the spirit, *Joh.* 6.44. *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*: and the Father draweth by the Spirit. You have had external calls of the Word to come unto Christ; have you been called effectually, and drawn powerfully, irresistably, and yet most sweetly by the Spirit, unto Jesus Christ? Have you had a discovery by the Spirit, not only of your necessity of, and lost estate without an interest in Christ; but also of Christs beauty and transcendent lovelinesse, His excellency, and great willingness to give entertainment unto you in this relation? and have you been moved and drawn hereby unto him?

3. If you be espoused unto Christ, then you have laid hold upon him by faith; the spirit doth draw unto Christ, by working the Grace of Faith, and enabling persons to believe in him; by Faith Christ is received, *Joh.* 1. 12. *To as many as received*

ceived him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name. By believing on Christs name, persons do receive Christ in this relation, Faith is the hand of the Soul, which layeth hold on Christ, and by this joyning of the hand with Christ, the knot is tyed, and the Soul is united to Christ in the relation of a Spouse; have you this Grace of Faith wrought in you with power? have you received and applied Christ unto your selves? have you received him upon his own termes? and do you by Faith draw quickning and strengthning influences from him?

4. If you be espoused unto Christ, then you do embrace him in the arms of your deerest love; then you love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and you love him with the supremacy of your love; If you love father or mother, houses or lands, riches or honours, delights or pleasures, or any thing in the world, more than Christ, you have no true love to Christ, and be sure are not espoused to him; but if Christ be chiefly beloved, it is an evidence that yon are joyned in this relation unto him.

5. If you are espoused unto Christ, you have acquaintance and converse with Christ, and you like his company best, and you highly value, and diligently attend upon all those Ordinances which are the means of bringing you and Christ together; and this is the great thing which you desire and seek after in Hearing and Prayer, and at the Table of the Lord, that you may have a sight of your Beloved, and a taste of his Love, and more intimate communion with Him. And is acquaintance begun with Christ, and farther intimacy desired by

by you? Are pure and powerful Ordinances of great esteem with you? Do you give all diligence to wait upon, and for your Beloved in them?

6. If you are espoused unto Christ, then you endeavour to promote his interest, and advance his name in the world; then when others seek their own things, you seek the things of Jesus Christ, and look upon them as your own; when others labour chiefly to lift up themselves in the esteem of men, you labour above all to lift up Christ in mens esteem; you are commending your beloved above all others beloved, and endeavour to bring others in love with him, and into the same relation with your selves vnto him. Can you shew such evidences as these of your espousals unto Christ? And if beyond these, you have love-tokens to shew which you have received from Christ; if he have given you Soul-refreshing visits, heart-ravishing smiles, gracious returns to your Prayers, the white stone, a sight of your name written in his book, the hidden manna, the fruit of the tree of life, a glympse of glory, an earnest of your inheritance, a fore-taste of Heaven, un-utterable peace of conscience; a heart enlarged with love to Him, and filled sometimes with the joyes of the Holy Ghost; such love-tokens as these may put it quite out of question whether you are espoused unto Christ, when all these are the tokens of his conjugal, especial, and most endeared Love.

Use 2. For reproof of all those that refuse or neglect Christs invitation of them, to be his Spouse.

1. This

1. This is your great sin, hereby you highly affront Christ, and you exceedingly offend him: I suppose it would offend and highly displease your selves, should you make love to an inferiour, and have your persons contemned, and your love slighted by them; Christ hath made love, and made suit unto you, who are infinitely inferiour unto him, He calleth upon you, and his great desire of you is, that you would be his Spouse; by your refusal of him, and neglect of his invitation, you contemn his person, and slight his Love; yea, you preferr his inferiours before him; even those that are not worthy to be nam'd with him: and can there be a greater indignity offered? If Christ should contemn you that are so mean, and slight your Love, as unworthy of any regard, it would not be so much wonder; It is no great wonder to see a Prince slight the aspiring conjugal Love of a Beggar; but for you that are beggarly sinners to slight the person and love of such a Prince, this is a great sin and provocation.

2. This is your great folly as well as sin, to refuse and neglect the gracious proffers of being made the Spouse of Christ; hereby you forfeit all that especial Love of his which you might have, with all the endeared expressions thereof: by this refusal and neglect you chuse raggs before robes, dross before gold; pebbles before jewels; guilt before a pardon; wounds before healing; defilement before cleansing; deformity before comelinesse; trouble before peace; slavery before liberty; the service of the Devil before the service of Christ; hereby you chuse dishonour before a crown; death before life; Hell before Heaven; eternal pain and

misery before everlasting joy and glory. And need there a farther evidence of your folly and madness, in refusing and neglecting of Christs invitation to be his Spouse?

Use 3. For comfort of all those that have hearkned, considered, and are inclined and perswaded to be the Spouse of Jesus Christ.

1. This is your wisdome, they are foolish Virgins which refuse, but you are the wise Virgins, who have accepted of Christs proffer, and have disposed your selves unto him; you have made the wisest choice; and however the blind World may deem you fools, yet you are wise in the esteem of God, and one day will be so in the esteem of them them that now despise you.

2. This is your glory, you that are espoused unto Jesus Christ, are advanced unto great dignity and honour; you are of all others in the world most highly preferred: It is the dignity of Christ to be so near to the Father, and it is your dignity to be so near unto Christ: It is Christs honour beyond every creature, that he is joyned in the hypostatical union unto the Father, and it is your honour that you are joyned in this mystical and conjugal union and relation unto the eternal Son of God. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdome, nor the mighty man glory in his strength, nor the wealthy man glory in his riches; but you may glory in the Lord, that you are espoused unto Christ; glory not in your selves, but in the Lord, who hath most freely and graciously taken you into this relation.

3. This is your safety: If you are espoused unto Christ,

Christ, you are under the wing of his especial protection continually, he is by this relation unto you, engaged to protect and defend you, and that from Sin and Sathan, and eternal ruine, and so long you are safe; yea, he hath a special regard for you in times of danger from men, he hath secret chambers of his providence to hide you in when there are great storms and tempests of trouble about you, and if such times should overtake you, which are not very unlikely, either he will preserve you from common desolation, or by it lodge you with himself out of the reach of all future trouble.

4. This may comfort you at all times, and in all conditions, that you are so nearly related unto Christ, that he loveth you when the world hateth you, that he careth for you, and hath promised to provide for you what is needful here, and at length will receive you to the mansions he hath prepared in his Fathers house, where you shall see, and share in his glory, and take up your habitation for ever with him.

Use 4. For Exhortation both of those that as yet are not espoused unto Christ, and of those that are espoused.

1. You that are not as yet espoused unto Christ, I shall direct my speech unto you, and that to all both men and women, but particularly to you that are young women, whom especially I am now called to preach unto. It may be novelty and curiosity hath brought many hither this day, which otherwise would not have been here; and possibly the Lord may make use of this opportunity, not

only to invite by his Word, but also to perswade by his Spirit, some of you to espouse your selves unto him; and if any souls may now be brought to a closure with Jesus Christ, I shall attain my great end, and both you and I shall rejoyce that I hearkened unto that motion and desire which was made to mee of preaching a particular Sermon unto young women, as I have done many particularly unto young men. Come, Virgins, will you give me leave to be a Suiter unto you, not in my own name, but in the name of my Lord? May I prevail with you for your affections, and perswade you to give them unto Christ? May I be instrumental to joyn you and Christ together this day? Be not coy, as some of you possibly are in other Loves: Modesty and the Virgin blush may very well become you, when motions of another kind are made unto you; but here coyness is folly, and backwardness to accept of this motion is a shame; and you have ten thousand times more reason to blush at the refusal of Christ for your beloved, than at the acceptance; when otherwise the Devil and Sin would ravish your Virgin affections. Never had you a better motion made to you, never was such a match proffered to you as this, of being matched and espoused unto Jesus Christ.

1. Consider who the Lord Jesus is, whom you are invited to espouse your selves unto; He is the best Husband; none comparable to Jesus Christ.

1. Do you desire one that is great? He is of the highest dignity: none ever did or could climb into so high a seat, or attain such excellent Majesty, as that which Christ is exalted unto; he is exalted above all the Kings of the Earth, *Rev.* 19. 16. *He hath*

hath on his veſture, and on his thigh a Name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. Yea, he is exalted above the Angels in Heaven, and none have ſuch authority; 1 *Pet.* 3. 22. *Who is gone into Heaven; Angels, and Authority, and Powers being made ſubject unto him; He is the firſt-born of every creature; by whom, and for whom, all things were created; He is before all things, and by him all things do conſiſt; He is the Head of the Church, the beginning, the firſt born from the dead, and as over all perſons, ſo in all things he hath the prehemi-nence.* Col. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18. *He is the brightneſs of his Fathers glory, the expreſs image of his perſon,* Heb. 1. 3. He is the glory of Heaven, the darling of eternity, admired by Angels, dreaded by Devils, adored by Saints. If the meaneſt Beggar ſhould be matched unto the greateſt earthly Prince that ever lived, it would not be ſuch an advancement unto her, as for you to be eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the King of glory, whoſe honour and dignity you will partake of, in, and by this relation.

2. Do you deſire one that is rich? None is comparable unto Chriſt, who is the *heir of all things, Heb.* 1. 2. *in whom all fulneſs doth dwell,* Col. 1. 19. Not only the fulneſs of the earth doth belong to him, *Pſal.* 24. 1. but alſo the fulneſs of Heaven is at his diſpoſe, all things being given, and delivered unto him by the Father, *Joh.* 3. 35. *Matth.* 11. 26. the riches of grace are at his diſpoſe, and the riches of glory; in him are hid all treaſures, *Col.* 2. 3. and the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt,* Eph. 3. 8. The riches of Chriſt are unſearchable, in regard of the worth of them; they

are ineſtimable, the value of them is paſt finding out; and they are unſearchable in regard of the abundance of them; they are inexhauſtible; none can draw dry Chriſts Fountain, none can ſearch and find out the bottom of Chriſts treaſury. If you be eſpouſed unto Chriſt, you ſhall ſhare in his unſearchable riches, you ſhall receive of his fulneſs, grace for grace here, and glory for glory hereafter; and he will make all needful proviſions for your outward man, whilſt your abode is here in this world.

3. Do you deſire one that is wiſe? There is none comparable unto Chriſt for wiſdome; His knowledge is infinite, and his wiſdome is correſpondent: *Solomon* exceeded all that went before him, or that followed after him, in wiſdome; but he did not ſo far exceed a man of the meaneſt wit and ſhalloweſt capacity, as he was exceeded by Jeſus Chriſt; Chriſt is not only wiſe, but *wiſdom*, *Matth.* 11. 19. *the wiſdome of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. Chriſt is infinitely wiſe in himſelf, and he is the ſpring of all the true, ſpiritual, and heavenly wiſdome, which is derived unto any of the children of men, *Col.* 2. 3. *In him are hid all treaſures of wiſdome and knowledge.* If you be eſpouſed unto Chriſt, he will guide and counſel you, and make you wiſe unto ſalvation.

4. Do you deſire one that is potent, who may defend you againſt your enemies, and any kind of injuries and abuſes? There is none that can equal Chriſt in power; others have ſome power, but Chriſt hath all power, *Matth.* 28. 18. Others may be potent, but Chriſt is omnipotent; others have power, Chriſt is power; *the power of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24.

1. 24. And if you be espoused unto Christ, his infinite power is engaged in your defence against your enemies; He will subdue your iniquities, *Mic.* 7. 19. By that power whereby he is able to subdue all things, *Philip.* 3. 21. He will bruise Sathan under your feet, *Rom.* 16 20. He will keep you from the evil of the world, *Joh.* 17, 15, He will make you more than conquerours over all your spiritual enemies, who, without his help, would not only abuse and injure you, but also ruine and destroy you, *Rom.* 8. 37.

5. Do you desire one that is good? There is none like unto Christ in this regard; others may have some goodness, but it is imperfect; Christs goodness is compleat and perfect; He is full of goodness, and in him dwelleth no evil; He is good, and he doth good; and if you are espoused unto Christ, however bad you are by nature, he will make you in some measure good like himself.

6. Do you desire one that is beautiful? Christ is *fairer than the children of men*, Psal 45. 2. *He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand*, Cant. 5. 10. *His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely*, v. 16. His eyes are most sparkling, his looks and glances of love are most ravishing, his smiles are most delightful and refreshing unto the Soul; Christ is the most lovely and amiable person of all others in the world, none so accomplished in all regard as he is accomplished, and therefore he is most desirable in this relation; and however unlovely you are in your selves, however deformed and defiled by sin, yet if you be espoused unto Christ, he will put his comeliness upon you, he will wash you in a bath made of his own bloud,

from your defilements, and beautifie you with his own image, and so you shall become exceeding fair; and as you may have leave to delight your selves in Christs beauty, so he will greatly desire and delight in yours, as in the Text; *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear*, &c. *so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.*

7. Do you desire one that can love you? None can love you like unto Christ: His love is incomparable, and his love is incomprehensible; his love passeth all others love; and it passeth knowledge too; *Eph.* 3. 19. His love is first, without any beginning; his love is free, without any motive; his love is great, without any measure; his love is constant, without any change; and his love is everlasting, without any end. It was the Love of Christ which brought him down from Heaven, which vail'd his Divinity in a Humane Soul and Body; which put upon him the form of a servant; which expos'd him to contempt, reproach, and many indignities: It was love which made him subject to hunger, and thirst, and sorrow, and many humane infirmities, which humbled him unto death, even the painful and ignominious death of the Cross; and when out of love he had finished the work of Redemption on earth, as to what was needful by way of satisfaction; it was his love which carried him back to heaven, where he was before, that he might make application of what he had purchased, that there he might make Intercession for those whom he had redeemed, and prepare a place for them, even glorious mansions with himself, in the house not made with hands, which is eternal in the Heavens: It is out of Love that he send-

ſendeth ſuch tokens to his people from Heaven to Earth, which he conveyeth through his Ordinances by his Spirit unto them; and his love-tokens are infinitely beyond all other love-tokens in worth and excellency; ſurely then none is ſo deſirable as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for you to eſpouſe your ſelves unto. If you be eſpouſed to Chriſt, he is yours, all that he is, all that he hath; you ſhall have his heart, and ſhare in the choiceſt expreſſions of his deareſt Love. And now put all together. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt being incomparable in dignity, in riches, in wiſdome, in power, in goodueſs, in lovelineſs, and in love; methinks you ſhould need no other motive to perſwade you unto willingneſs to eſpouſe your ſelves unto him.

2. Conſider that you are invited unto this relation of a Spouſe unto Chriſt; *Hearken, O daughter, and conſider, incline thine ear*, &c. In thoſe words the Lord Jeſus doth woo you to be his Spouſe; we Miniſters have a commiſſion from our Lord to invite you in his name unto this thing, and Chriſts invitations are, 1. Real; 2. General; 3. Frequent; 4. Earneſt; 5. Free.

1. Chriſts invitations of you to be his Spouſe are Real; the thing is real, that there ir an eſpouſal between Chriſt and his people; It is no fancy, which hath no ground or foundation, but in the fond mind and imagination of ſome fancy-full men, as ſome may deem it to be; for there is a clear foundation for it in the Scriptures, 2 *Cor.* 11. 1. *I have eſpouſed you unto one Husband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte Virgin unto Chriſt.* 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joyned unto the Lord, is one ſpirit.* And as the thing is real, ſo you are really invited unto it; the Lord doth

doth not mock and dissemble with you, as some pretending Lovers, who dissemble love unto Virgins, until they have gained their affections, and then falsly and basely relinquish them, never really intending either to espouse or marry them: But the Lord doth really intend the thing, in his invitations of you; He is repulsed by many, unto whom he maketh suit for their affections; but he never did cast off any whose consent and affections he had gained.

2. Christs invitations of you to be his Spouse, are General; All of you are invited, and none of you excepted; none are excluded, but such of you as exclude your selves; all sorts of persons are invited, not only such who are of the higheſt quality, of whom very few do hearken; but also those who are of the meaneſt degree in the world: the poor, and the blind, and the lame, and the most despicable in the eyes of men as they are invited unto the marriage Supper, *Luk.* 14.21. so upon their coming they are received into the marriage relation unto Christ. All sorts of sinners are invited, not only those who have kept their garments from grosser spots, and escaped the greater pollutions which are in the world through Lust; but also the most vile and abominable sinners, such who have run with others unto the same excess of riot, and wallowed like swine in the deepest mire of sin, the most notorious transgressours are invited to be Christs Spouse, and shall be as welcome as any unto the embracements of his Love.

3. Christ's invitations of you to be his Spouse, are Frequent; Some will ask you once and twice, but if they be denied, they will ask no more; especially

cially if they be of ſuperiour quality, and it would be for your advancement to hearken and conſent; but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth invite not once or twice, but very frequently; he ſtretcheth forth his hand all the day long, and though you have been a gain-ſaying people, he doth ſtill invite you; He hath been a Suiter unto ſome of you for many years together, and he is ſtill a ſuiter; and though he be ſo much your ſuperiour, and you will be infinitely beholding to him to take you into this relation; notwithſtanding all repulſes and unkindneſſes, he doth invite you again by me this day, to be his Spouſe.

4. Chriſts invitations of you to be his Spouſe, are Earneſt; He is very importunate with you; He doth not tacitly ſignifie his mind, and willingneſs to accept of you, which would have been an infinite condeſcention, and ſufficient encouragement for you to apply your ſelves unto him; but he doth call upon you, and not only call, but he doth call earneſtly; yea, he uſeth many arguments to perſwade you; and he addeth entreaties to his invitations; He giveth us Miniſters a commiſſion to beſeech you that you would be eſpouſed unto him; He is very loth to take any denial, he is very unwilling to be put off; He knocks and knocks hard at the door of your hearts, for enrertainment: and as earneſtneſs and importunity in Prayer doth prevail with the Lord for audience and an anſwer; ſo the Lords earneſtneſs and importunity ſhould prevail with you for acceptance of him in this deſirable relation.

5. Chriſts invitations of you to be his Spouſe, are Free; He doth not expect a portion and dowry with

with you, as many, yea, most great persons do in their applications to any upon this account, they expect something answerable to their degree and estate; but none have any thing answerable unto Christs degree, neither doth he expect any thing, he hath enough for you and him too; and you must have nothing, if you would be espoused unto him; you must be poor, and naked, and empty, and he will enrich, and clotha, and fill, and supply you out of his treasury, with all things needful to qualifie you and make you meet for himself.

3. Consider if you be once espoused unto Christ, you shall never be divorced, if once joyned in this relation unto him, you shall never be separated from him; neither Men nor Devils shall be able to disjoyn you, and when Death doth break all other conjugal bonds, it shall not break the conjugal bonds between you and Christ, but bring you unto the most full and everlasting possession of your beloved.

And what do yon now say, young women? shall I have a grant for my Master, or be sent away with a repulse and refusal? Methinks by this time ye should begin to have a mind unto Jesus Christ; You look as if you did desire; you hearken, as if you would consent; what do you say? shall the match be made up this day between Christ and your souls? may I be instrumental to joyn your hands, or rather your hearts together? may I be instrumental to tye that knot which can never be untied? Some marry in haste, and repent at leisure; but if you were once espoused unto Jesus Christ, you would never repent; nothing would grieve you but that you were joyned unto him no sooner;

er; and you would not be disjoyned again for all the world. Shall this be the day of your espousals? Some of you have stayed a long time, and will you deferr any longer? If you will not now, it may be Christ will not another time; if you refuse now Christ calleth and inviteth, Christ may refuse when you call and intreat: this may be the last time of asking, and therefore it is dangerous to refuse: Some of you are very young, too young for other espousals, but none of you are too young for this espousal unto Jesus Christ; in other espousals you must have the consent of Parents, but in this you are at your own dispose; you may give, and ought to match your selves to Christ, whether Parents do consent or no.

Qu. But what shall we do that we may be espoused unto Jesus Christ?

Answ. 1. Be sensible of your need of Christ, and this espousal unto him, without which, you are slaves unto sin and Sathan, children of wrath, hated by God here, and in danger of eternal ruine in the other world; and therefore that there is a necessity of this relation unto Christ, that you may hereby be interested in his redemption and salvation.

2. Labour for longing desires after this relation unto Christ; he desires that you would be his Spouse, and do you desire that you may be espoused to him; desire it chiefly, and desire it earnestly; and for this end consider the motives which I have spread before you, to excite your desires after Christ.

3. Diligently seek after this relation to Christ, attend upon the Ordinances which God hath appointed to be the means of bringing and joyning you

you and Christ together: such as hearing the word, prayer, &c. seek after Christ in hearing, and rest not in the outside of the duty, and cry mightily to God in prayer, that he would draw you and joyn you by his spirit unto his Son.

4. Put off your filthy garments, I do not speak of the garments about your bodies, but of the filthy raggs of sin which are about your Souls: you must lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, all pride, and envy, and malice, and worldliness, and inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence, and every other defiling lust; these are the old clothes of the old man which must be put off if you would be espoused unto Christ.

5. Put on the white raiment and clean garments and rich robes which Christ hath provided for you; I mean the attire of grace, the robes of his perfect righteousness, in these garments you will be beautiful and accepted.

6. Reach forth the hand of faith, and lay hold on him, consent that you will have him, and receive him upon his own tearms, and he is yours for ever.

7. Devote your selves to him body, and soul, and all, to be his for ever; and then you may say, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; and then happy, happy you that ever you were born!

2. To you that are espoused unto Jesus Christ:

1. Admire and adore that rich and free grace which hath chosen and brought you into this relation; say, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise*: Say, O wonderful! wonderful! wonderful Love! that we should be made the Spouse of Christ! We that had no Beauty! we that had no Dowry! that we who embraced Dunghils should

be

be taken into the embracements of the Lord! O Infinite condeſcending kindneſs!

2. See that you give reverence unto Chriſt to whom yon are eſpouſed: He is your Lord, and you muſt reverence, and ſtand in awe of him; take heed of pride, paſſion, diſcontent with your condition, murmurings under affliction, and every other ſin which is diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and unbecoming the reverence which you owe to him.

3. Be loving and faithful unto Chriſt, receive not any creature in the world into the embracements of that deareſt love which doth belong to your eſpouſed Husband; love him ſupremely, and love him ardently, and labour to increaſe in love to him daily.

4. Be ſubject unto Chriſt, and careful to pleaſe him in every thing, be ready to yeild univerſal obedience unto whatſoever he ſhall reveal to you to be his will.

5. Endeavour to mantain daily communion with him in his Ordinance, deſire not ordinances for themſelves, but for the ſake of Chriſt; grieve when he withdraws, and is abſent; rejoyce when he draws near, and manifeſteth his preſence.

6. Look, and long, and prepare for Chriſts ſecond appearance, when the nuptials between you ſhall be ſolemnized, and you taken to live with him for ever in manſions of everlaſting joyes.

FINIS.